

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /072 W  
-----049276 160931Z /10

R 151515Z AUG 77  
FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6381  
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN  
UUEHCR/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 3489  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
USMISSION USUN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 1205

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, SF  
SUBJ: PUBLIC REACTIONS TO SQUATTER PROBLEM

REF: CAPE TOWN 1198 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: OVER 2,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED MEETING AT CITY HALL  
AUGUST 14 TO PROTEST DEMOLITION OF SQUATTER SHANTIES  
(REFTELS). OFFICIALS AGREED OVER WEEKEND TO 5-DAY DELAY  
IN FURTHER DEMOLITIONS. END SUMMARY

1. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE OVERFLOW CROWD OF MORE THAN  
2,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED MULTI-RACIAL, MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL  
MEETING AT CAPE TOWN CITY HALL AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 14 TO  
PROTEST CONTINUED DEMOLITION OF SQUATTER SHANTIES.  
ATTENDEES INCLUDED RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS  
AND LEADING OPPOSITION POLITICIANS. DECISION WAS TAKEN TO  
FORM "ACTION COMMITTEE" HEADED BY MP NIC OLIVIER (ONE OF  
BASSON GROUP WHO PLAN MERGER WITH PRP) TO TRY TO HALT  
FURTHER DEMOLITIONS.

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2. SPEAKERS DELIVERED CHURCH CRITICISM OF SAG POLICY  
WITH ANGLICAN DEAN E.L. KING DESCRIBING MODDERDAM  
EVENTS AS "OBSCENE" AND SYMPTOMATIC OF "THE HEARTLESSNESS  
OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY TODAY". MUSLIM LEADER  
SHEIKH GAIBER SAID HE WAS FILLED WITH "UNPRECEDENTED REVULSION"  
WHILE "COLORED" DUTCH REFORM MINISTER

ALAN BOESAK EXPRESSED "ABSOLUTE HORROR AT THE BLATANT INHUMANITY OF GOVT ACTION". HE DREW LOUD APPLAUSE WHEN HE SAID HE REJECTED "THE BLASPHEMOUS CLAIM" THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY AND CALLED ON PEOPLE TO JOIN HIM IN PRAYING "FOR THE DOWNFALL OF THIS GOVT".

3. EVEN SOME SAG SUPPORTERS HAVE BEGUN TO EXPRESS CONCERN. INFORMATION SECRETARY ESCHER RHOODIE WAS QUOTED IN PRESS AS DEPLORING SAG'S TIMING IN CARRYING OUT DEMOLITIONS "DURING THE COLDEST, WETTEST, WINDIEST TIME OF THE YEAR" - AND ARGUING IT COULD HAVE CHOSEN A BETTER TIME. WELL-KNOWN COLUMNIST AND SELF-DESCRIBED MEMBER OF NATIONALIST PARTY JOYCE WARING PUBLISHED LENGTHY ARTICLE IN WEEKEND "ARGUS" NEW PAPER ENTITLED "HAVE WE ALL GONE MAD?" WHICH CRITICIZES SAG FOR ALLOWING SUCH SITUATION TO DEVELOP AND ENDS BY SAYING "SOMETIMES, AS NOW, I FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHERE I STAND".

4. SQUATTERS' ATTORNEY R. ROSENTHAL ANNOUNCED AUGUST 13 THAT OFFICIALS HAD AGREED TO DELAY DEMOLITION AT WERKGENOT CAMP, SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 15, UNTIL AUGUST 19 PROVIDED "A REASONABLE NUMBER" OF SHACKS WERE DISMANTLED BY SQUATTERS THEMSELVES OVER WEEKEND. ROSENTHAL TOLD THE MEETING AT CITY HALL THAT 1,200 LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOMES HAD BEEN DESTROYED AT MODDERDAM LEAVING SOME 10,000 PEOPLE HOMELESS. HE SAID PLANNED DEMOLITION OF WERKGENOT WOULD RENDER ANOTHER 5,000 PEOPLE HOMELESS AND UP TO A FURTHER 2,000 WHEN UNIBELL CAMP IS DEMOLISHED. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CAPE FLATS INTERIM ACCOMMODATION COMMITTEE, CELESTE SANTOS, TOLD CONGENOFF THERE WERE STILL "SEVERAL HUNDRED" PEOPLE AT MODDERDAM CAMP UNDER MAKESHIFT SHELTERS WHO HAVE REFUSED TO LEAVE DESPITE POLICE THREATS OF ARREST. SOCIAL WORKERS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN AT HIGH RISK OF DISEASE DUE TO BREAK-DOWN OF SANITATION PROCEDURES AND COLD, WET WEATHER.

5. HAVING ALREADY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO CLEARANCE OF ALL THREE CAMPS, OFFICIALS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE DETERRED BY LATEST OUTBURST OF PUBLIC CRITICISM. SOME SLOWING OF THE PACE OF DEMOLITIONS UNTIL WEATHER IMPROVES IS PROBABLY MOST THE SQUATTERS EXPECT AND EVEN THAT IS BY NO MEANS ASSURED. WHITE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009